

Message Text

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FROM CHIEF OF CONSULAR SECTION COFFMAN

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: CGEN, AG
SUBJECT: IMPROVING CONSULAR SERVICES

REF: STATE 263040

1. AS ACCURAGELY STATED IN REFTEL THE PRINCIPLE ELEMENT OF PROVIDING EFFICIENT CONSULAR SERVICES IS EFFECTIVE PUBLIC RELATIONS. THE TERM PUBLIC RELATIONS ITSELF IMPLIES AN INTERACTION BETWEEN THE CONSULAR OFFICER AND THE PUBLIC.

2. MANY FACTORS AFFECT THE SMOOTHNESS OF THIS INTERACTION; THE ATTITUDE OF THE CONSULAR OFFICER, THE PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS, THE ATTITUDE OF THE INDIVIDUAL CONSUMER, THE ATTITUDE OF THE PUBLIC IN GENERAL TOWARDS " ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGES" (BUREAUCRATS), THE EXPECTATIONS OF THE PUBLIC, AND THE LEGAL AND REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED UPON THE CONSULAR OFFICER.

3. THE CONSULAR OFFICER, IN REALITY, HAS FULL CONTROL OVER ONLY ONE OF THE ABOVE FACTORS, I.E. HIS OWN ATTITUDE. HE HAS PARTIAL CONTROL OVER TWO OF THE REST; THE PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS AND THE GENERAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGES. PHYSICAL SURROUNDINGS ARE DICTATED BY CLIMATE, BUDGETARY CONSIDERATIONS, AND ADMINISTRATIVE CREATIVENESS. THE ATTITUDE OF THE GENERAL
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PUBLIC TOWARDS ADMINISTRATIVE JUDGES IS THE LEGACY OF A LONG HISTORY OF INEFFICIENT AND PETTY BUREAUCRACY THROUGHOUT THE FABRIC OF MODERN SOCIETY.

4. THE THREE REMAINING FACTORS, OVER WHICH THE CONSULAR OFFICER HAS NO CONTROL AT ALL, ARE THE ONES WHICH CAN, AND MUST, BE ADDRESSED IN ORDER TO INCREASE THE OVERALL EFFICIENCY AND

REPUTATION OF THE CONSULAR SERVICE.

5. THE METHOD USED TO AFFECT THESE THREE FACTORS IS EASY TO NAME, BUT INFINITELY MORE DIFFICULT TO ACCOMPLISH. TO WIT, IT IS THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC AS TO THE SERVICES THEY CAN REALISTICALLY EXPECT GIVEN THE BUDGETARY, LEGAL, AND REGULATORY CONSTRAINTS IMPOSED UPON THE CONSULAR OFFICER. THIS IS, AT PRESENT, A TASK LARGELY LAID ON THE CONSULAR OFFICER ON THE LINE, THE PERFORMANCE OF WHICH, SERVERELY HAMPERS HIS ABILITY TO PERFORM HIS LEGITIMATE FUNCTIONS. THE FIFTEEN MINUTES USED IN EXPLAINING COURTEOUSLY WHAT WE CANNOT DO IS FIFTEEN MINUTES TAKEN AWAY FROM THE ACTUAL PERFORMANCE OF WHAT WE CAN DO.

6. THE PUBLIC MUST BE INFORMED BEFOREHAND OF WHAT SERVICES THEY CAN EXPECT FORM THE CONSULAR OFFICER. IF THE CONSULAR SERVICE IS TO BE TRUELY A CONSUMER-CONSCIOUS ORGANIZATION, WE MUST ADVERTISE MUCH MORE WIDELY THAN IS BEING DONE AT PRESENT.

7. CONSULAR OFFICERS, AS AN EXTENDED PART OF THEIR HOME-LEAVE CONSULTATIONS, COULD VISIT TOURIST AGENCIES IN THE REGION OF THIER HOME ADDRESSES AND ADDRESS PRIVATE ORGANIZATIONS PLANNING CHARTERED TOURS ABROAD. THE DEPARTMENT COULD ALSO SPONSOR TOUR INDUSTRY RELATED SEMINARS IN THE COURSE OF WHICH TOUR ORGANIZERS AND LEADERS COULD BE GIVEN UP-TO-THE-MINUTE NEWS ON SPECIFIC PROBLEMS AMERICANS ARE ENCOUNTERING ABROAD. THIS "EDUCATION" WOULD NOT ENTIRELY ELIMINATE THE EDUCATIONAL UNCLASSIFIED

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FUNCTION OF THE CONSULAR OFFICER IN THE FIELD, BUT WOULD AID IN REDUCING DEGREE OF FALSE EXPECTATIONS ON THE PART OF THE AMERICAN PUBLIC, AS WELL AS PERMITTING THEM TO AVOID SOME OF THE COMMON PITFALLS. STEPHAN

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